

UNCLASSIFIED

pw
RELEASED IN FULL

United States Department of State

Washington, D. C. 20520

3/25/98

M43



INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

S/S

CONFIDENTIAL

DECL: OADR

TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: P - Mr. Tarnoff
G - Mr. Wirth *VEW*

FROM: AF - Edward Brynn, Acting

SUBJECT: Rwanda Update

SUMMARY

Relief organizations project that new refugee outflows from Rwanda into Zaire could reach the one million mark very soon. The current refugee population in the region is nearly 1.9 million and the internally displaced number over 3 million. Displaced persons are pouring into the French safe zone in southwest Rwanda. The international community is gearing up for a massive relief effort in the face of serious resource and logistical constraints. We are providing diplomatic support to the temporary French-led operation while continuing our efforts to expedite expansion of UNAMIR. In response to our demarche, the RPF has said it will halt its offensive, which would relieve the pressure on populations. The RPF plans to announce a new government on Monday, July 18. We have urged them to enter into a meaningful dialogue with other relevant political forces to set up a truly broad-based government.

DISCUSSION

The Humanitarian Crisis and the U.S./International Response

Within the last three days, some 700,000 new Rwandan refugees have reportedly crossed into Zaire at Goma, the rear base of France's Operation Turquoise, breaking the world's rapid refugee influx record set in April when some 250,000 Rwandans crossed into Tanzania in a 36-hour period. This brings the current UNHCR refugee caseload in the region to nearly 1.9 million. The Rwandan internally displaced persons (IDP) population is over 3 million.

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

There are indications that at least another 300,000 are now on the way to Zaire, urged on in part by extremist Hutu radio. Within the French safe zone are an estimated 2 million people who could rapidly move into Zaire (including into the even more remote Bukavu area) if they feel their security is threatened or if humanitarian relief is not available.

The three major international organization players -- UNHCR for refugees, ICRC for the IDPs, and WFP for food for all -- had already engaged in contingency planning and begun some stockpiling. The current numbers surpass projections, however. These relief organizations have told the donor community that a vigorous partnership (i.e., resources) will be required to address the new, as well as the old, needs.

In this fast-moving situation we have two major concerns -- resource availability and security for refugees/IDPs and the relief networks themselves. Since April, the United States has provided about \$97 million in humanitarian aid (from all agencies) for the Rwanda/Burundi region. We and the EU are the largest donors. Those sums addressed the needs through mid-1994 and before the new Zaire emergency within an emergency. The additional requirements have yet to be costed out. UNHCR alone has tentatively projected a need for some \$29 million beyond the \$70 million already needed for the rest of 1994. Food requirements for an additional 3 million beneficiaries for six months would amount to 270,000 MT. The WFP is already moving to "borrow" food from other populations (e.g., Sudanese refugees in Uganda, Angola), but much of the food will need to be purchased regionally as donor commodities are already fully programmed for emergencies worldwide.

Despite overall resource limitations and the daunting humanitarian situations that we face elsewhere in the world, including in our own hemisphere, we are moving expeditiously to address the Zaire crisis. We understand that the President is likely to approve this weekend a drawdown of \$19 million from his ERMA Fund in response to our pre-Zaire crisis recommendation for a \$20 million drawdown. USAID Administrator Atwood will travel this weekend to Goma in his standing capacity as the President's special coordinator for disaster relief. DOD has been able to restore funding availability that had been transferred to Haiti to begin airlifts in behalf of ICRC, UNHCR and WFP. Some 80 flights are anticipated in the coming days. For example, beginning Monday, one sortie per day will deliver plastic sheeting for UNHCR from Mombasa to Goma. Airlift of ICRC food commodities is also in train. DOD is checking on excess trucks -- a critically needed item.

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

We are concerned about the armed elements, including the former government forces and extremist militia, crossing into Zaire with the refugees and entering the French safe zone with the displaced. Neither the Zairois nor the French are in a position to adequately disarm them or to provide security for refugees/IDPs and the relief networks themselves. We do not want to see a nascent guerrilla opposition profiting from humanitarian assistance efforts. There should be urgency to the international community's efforts to set up a system to identify, detain, and try those accused of crimes against humanity. We are consulting at the UN on this issue and are in the process of soliciting cooperation from NGOs to supply us with information concerning the killings.

Operation Turquoise and UNAMIR

Operation Turquoise, the French-led humanitarian intervention, risks being overwhelmed by the population movements into the French safe zone. To assist the French, we put pressure on the RPF to halt its offensive, have urged WFP and others to get more food into the zone, and supported a Security Council statement on July 14 calling for an immediate cease-fire and a rapid international humanitarian response.

The French have made two formal requests for U.S. airlift assistance in support of their Operation Turquoise in Rwanda. The first request was subsequently withdrawn; in the second case, although the interagency group met quickly and agreed in principle to supply the lift, we were unable to meet France's very short time deadline, and the French arranged the airlift themselves. Another request was expected but was never formally made. Although we had been told that the French had assumed our lift would be on a reimbursable basis, we learned later that some French officials were disappointed that DoD would require reimbursement. We are fully prepared to support future requests for lift. In order to assure that adequate planning takes place, we have asked the French to make their requests more clear and detailed and to provide as much lead-time as possible. The reimbursement issue is still being discussed within the interagency process.

We are continuing our efforts to expedite expansion of UNAMIR to replace the French. Following our shipment of 50 APC's to Uganda, the first group of 206 Ghanaians arrived in Rwanda. We are working with the UN to provide other necessary equipment to accelerate deployment of the remainder of the Ghanaian battalion. We have urged the donor community to adopt other UNAMIR battalions, and these efforts are continuing. We are also clearing an instruction to USUN to raise with the UN changing UNAMIR's concept of operations to reflect the changed circumstances on the ground.

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 4 -

We will send to USUN and Embassy Paris on Monday a draft resolution that would authorize the forces of member states present in Rwanda under UN auspices to detain persons who are reasonably believed to have committed serious violations of international humanitarian law. The resolution would also urge states bordering Rwanda to detain suspected perpetrators of atrocities.

Diplomatic Initiatives

We have been pressing the RPF to agree to a cease-fire ever since fighting resumed in April. We redoubled this effort in the face of the current humanitarian crisis, arguing that Rwandans will continue to flee into Zaire and the French safe zone in huge numbers as long as the RPF offensive continues. As a result of a phone demarche by AF DAS Bushnell, RPF Commander Kagame gave his verbal commitment that his troops would stop fighting by the night of July 15. Although he initially had said that a cease-fire would be declared in a few days, he became far more forthcoming after DAS Bushnell informed him that we had decided to "de-recognize" the "interim government." It is not yet clear whether the RPF has in fact halted its advance.

With the "interim government" forces routed and its leadership in flight, the RPF is now in a position to dictate the terms of a political settlement. However, the Tutsi population whom the RPF primarily represents is only a small fraction of Rwanda's population, and the RPF will not be able to govern the country on its own. In our demarches to the RPF, we have stressed that Rwanda must have a truly broad-based government, with powersharing between the RPF and a broad spectrum of Hutu parties, if the country is to have a real chance at lasting peace and national security. This government should be the result of genuine dialogue between all relevant political elements, not merely the product of RPF diktat. A truly representative government would reassure the civilian population and encourage an earlier return of refugees and displaced persons.

The RPF contends that it is committed to the principles of powersharing set forth in the Arusha peace accords and has been meeting with surviving moderate Hutu party leaders to set up a broad-based transition government. The RPF has just announced that the new government will be installed by July 18. The RPF seems to be moving very quickly, raising questions as to whether the government is truly the product of multi-party dialogue. We need to proceed cautiously before endorsing the new government's legitimacy.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Drafted:AF/C:KAiston;PRM/AAA:MMcKelvey;IO/PHO:RLoftis
SECC 4541, 07/15/94, x 7-3139

Cleared:AF/C:RFendrick
PRM/AAA:MMcKelvey
PM/ISP:DBolton
DRL:MMartinez
IO/PHO:JBrimms
EUR/WE:JHLewis (subst)

UNCLASSIFIED